

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of providing a contained charge of semi-solid metal alloy for use in a process for forming an article, the method including:

introducing a charge of a molten metal alloy into a container configured to be supported in a shot sleeve of a die-casting machine; and

allowing the molten metal alloy to reach a semi-solid state in the container; and

supporting the container with the metal alloy in a semi-solid state in the shot sleeve of the die-casting machine, wherein the container includes: including

an elongated body defining a side wall of the container, a mouth at a first end of the body and an opening at a second end of the body remote from the mouth; and

a closure member closing the opening at the second end of the body, the closure member being configured to be displaceable by a plunger of the die-casting machine along an interior volume of the body from the second end towards the first end to displace the charge of semi-solid metal alloy through the mouth at the first end of the body, and the closure member being of a metal alloy the same as or similar to the charge of metal alloy and having a melting point which is not less than the temperature of the molten metal alloy introduced into the container.

2. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, in which the closure member is dimensioned to be longitudinally axially displaceable through the mouth of the container by the plunger of the die-casting machine.

3. (Currently amended) A process for forming an article, the process including

providing a contained charge of semi-solid metal alloy in accordance with the method as claimed in claim 1; and

displacing the charge of semi-solid metal alloy from the container and forming the charge into a desired shape.

4. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 3, which is a rheo-casting process.

5. (Currently amended) The process as claimed in claim 3, in which displacing the charge of semi-solid metal alloy from the container includes displacing the closure member longitudinally axially out of the elongated body, through the mouth by the plunger of the die-casting machine.

6. (Currently amended) A rheo-casting container for containing a charge of semi-solid metal alloy, the container being configured to be supported in a shot sleeve of a die-casting machine and including:

an elongated body defining a side wall of the container, a mouth at a first end of the body, and an opening at a second end of the body remote from the mouth; and

a closure member to close the opening at the second end of the body, the closure member being configured to be displaceable by a plunger of the die-casting machine along an interior volume of the body from the second end towards the first end to displace a charge of semi-solid metal alloy contained in the container through the mouth at the first end of the body, and the closure member being of a metal alloy the same as or similar to the semi-solid metal alloy for which the container is to be used and having a melting point which is not less than the temperature at which the metal alloy is to be introduced into the container.

7. (Original) The rheo-casting container as claimed in claim 6, in which the side wall defines a circular cylindrical interior surface, with the closure member being disc-shaped.

8. (Previously presented) The rheo-casting container as claimed in claim 6, in which the closure member is located or locatable with a friction fit inside the body to close the opening, whilst still being displaceable along the interior volume of the body.

9. (Currently amended) The rheo-casting container as claimed in claim 6, in which the closure member is dimensioned to be longitudinally axially displaceable through the mouth of the container.

10-16. (Canceled).

17. (New) The method as claimed in claim 1, in which the side wall of the container extends unbroken or continuously between the mouth at the first end of the body and the opening at the second end of the body and in which the mouth and the opening face each other.

18. (New) The rheo-casting container as claimed in claim 6, in which the side wall of the container extends unbroken or continuously between the mouth at the first end of the body and the opening at the second end of the body and in which the mouth and the opening face each other.